

## Stawell Gymnastics Club Incorporated

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# CHILD SAFE POLICY

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### INTRODUCTION

Stawell Gymnastics Club expects children and young people who participate in its activities to have a safe and happy experience. Stawell Gymnastics Club supports and respects children, young people, staff, volunteers and participants.

The aim of this Policy is to protect the safety of children in our care and prevent abuse occurring, and in the event that allegations are raised in relation to child abuse, to ensure that the allegations are properly addressed. All complaints are treated seriously and are fully investigated and handled with maximum confidentiality and discretion.

### POLICY STATEMENT

Stawell Gymnastics Club is committed to providing the highest level of membership service. This includes protecting members' privacy, promotion of positive behaviours and attitudes, and protecting the health safety and wellbeing of members, particularly children.

Specifically, Stawell Gymnastics Club considers that the health, safety and well-being of children takes priority over all other competing considerations. Stawell Gymnastics Club considers that this is necessary to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all members and to protect the image and reputation of the sport, the Organisation and its affiliate members.

Stawell Gymnastics Club has a zero tolerance to child abuse and is committed to promoting and protecting children from abuse and neglect to the greatest extent possible. All children have equal rights to protection from child abuse, regardless of their sex, religion, disability or sexual orientation etc.

Child protection is a shared responsibility between Stawell Gymnastics Club, its employees, workers, contractors, associates, parents/guardians, coaches, spectators, volunteers and members of the gymnastics



community. Everyone that participates in Stawell Gymnastics Club's activities is responsible for the care and protection of children, and reporting information about child abuse.

Stawell Gymnastics Club supports the active participation of all children. It listens to their views, respects what they say and involves them when making decisions, where appropriate, especially about matters that will directly affect them (including their safety).

Stawell Gymnastics Club is also committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children living with a disability.

Stawell Gymnastics Club promotes fairness and consideration for all staff, volunteers and participants. For further details please refer to the Gymnastics Australia/Victoria Member Protection Policy.

## **SCOPE**

This Policy applies to participants, parents, spectators, contractors, officials, coaches, judges and staff throughout all Stawell Gymnastics Club events and activities.

This Policy will continue to apply retrospectively to a person or Member following the cessation of their association or employment with Stawell Gymnastics Club.

## **RELATED DOCUMENTS & LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS**

This Policy must be read in conjunction with:

(a) the law of the Commonwealth and Victoria including but not limited to:

- (i) Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- (ii) Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Act 2015 (Vic)
- (iii) Crimes Act 1958 (Vic); and
- (iv) Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)

(b) STAWELL GYMNASTICS CLUB policies and procedures, including but not limited to"

- (i) Constitution;
- (ii) Codes of behaviour;
- (iii) Member Protection Policy;
- (iv) Interacting with Children Policy;

## **DEFINITIONS**

Child means a person involved in the activities of Stawell Gymnastics Club (including athletes) and under the age of 18 years unless otherwise stated under the law applicable to the child.

Child protection means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.

Sexual offence means any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexually abusive behaviours can include the fondling of genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object, fondling of breasts, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography. It includes child grooming, which includes actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child (or the child's carer, family or supervisor) to lower the child's inhibitions and prepare them for engagement in a sexual offence.

Mandatory reporter means a person who is legally required to make a report to the Department of Human Services or the Police if they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection. It includes teachers, principals, registered psychologists, nurses, doctors and midwives.

### **Recognising and reporting child abuse**

A person may, in the course of participating in the sport or other activities of Stawell Gymnastics Club or carrying out their work, form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from child abuse.

If a person is concerned about an immediate risk to a child's safety, the person must phone "000" as soon as practicable.

Child abuse can be divided into four categories:

(a) **Physical abuse:** occurs when a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of a physical injury, such as a non-accidental physical injury.

(b) **Sexual abuse:** occurs when a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of sexual abuse, such as when a child is exploited, or used by another for his or her sexual gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of others.

(c) **Emotional and psychological abuse:** occurs when a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, emotional or psychological harm of such a kind that the child's emotional or intellectual development is or is likely to be significantly damaged; and

(d) **Neglect:** occurs when a child's physical development or health has been, or is likely to be significantly damaged. It refers to an omission, such as depriving a child of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, or medical care.

6.4 Child abuse includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child, in circumstances where the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child.

### **Mandatory reporters**

Select classes of people in the community (including teachers, nurses and doctors) are required by law to report to the Child Protection Unit of the Department of Health and Human Services (**DHHS**) where they have formed a belief, on reasonable grounds, that a child is in need of protection because they have suffered (or are likely to suffer) significant harm due to physical or sexual abuse.

This report must be made as soon as practicable, and after each occasion where he or she becomes aware of a further reasonable grounds for the belief.

### **Reasonable grounds for belief**

A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:

- (a) the child is in need of protection;
- (b) the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical or sexual injury; and
- (c) the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

To form a reasonable belief, you should consider and objectively assess all the relevant facts, such as the source of the allegation and how it was communicated, the nature of and details of the allegation, and whether there are any other related matters known regarding the alleged perpetrator.

A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof, but is more than mere rumour or speculation.

You will have reasonable grounds to notify if:

- (a) a child states that they have been physically or sexually abused;
- (b) a child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);
- (c) someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused;
- (d) professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused; or
- (e) signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.

### **Voluntary reporters**

In addition to the mandatory reporting obligations above, any person who believes on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from any form of child abuse, *may* disclose that information to the Police or DHHS.

### **Reporting child sexual abuse**

If a person receives information that leads them to form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria against a child (under the age of 16 years) by another person (of or over the age of 18 years), the person has a legal obligation to disclose that information to the Police as soon as it is practicable. Individuals who fail to comply with this obligation under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic) may be subject to a penalty of 3 years imprisonment.

### **Stawell Gymnastics Club's approach to reports of abuse**

Stawell Gymnastics Club supports and encourages a person to make a report to the Police or DHHS if they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection, or they are concerned about the safety, health or wellbeing of a child.



Any person that makes a report in good faith in accordance with their reporting obligations (whether mandatory or discretionary) will be supported by Stawell Gymnastics Club, and will not be penalised by Stawell Gymnastics Club for making the report.

If a person is uncertain as to whether they should make a report to an external authority in relation to the safety of a child, they may speak to the Stawell Gymnastics Club MPIO for guidance and information. If in doubt, ask for assistance.

If an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer, Stawell Gymnastics Club will follow the reporting procedure and take all steps to ensure that the safety of the child is paramount. An initial step will involve the withdrawal of the accused person from active duty, which could entail standing down, reassignment to a role without direct contact with children, working under closer supervision during an investigation, working from home, or any other measures deemed appropriate depending on the seriousness of the allegation.

Stawell Gymnastics Club will investigate allegations of inappropriate conduct against a child in accordance with procedural fairness and will handle the allegations in a confidential manner to the greatest extent possible.

Stawell Gymnastics Club will cooperate with the directions of the Police and/or DHHS in relation to any investigation conducted by these authorities.

Stawell Gymnastics Club will keep a register of any allegations regarding inappropriate conduct.

## **CHILD SAFE AND CHILD FRIENDLY GUIDELINES**

### **Change Rooms**

Adult officials, regardless of gender, should only enter change rooms if accompanied by another adult. Prior to entering change rooms, officials should notify the people in the change room of their intended entrance. For the avoidance of doubt this requirement does not apply to parents/legal guardians when in a room with their child.

### **Hotel rooms and other accommodation**

No official should be alone in the room of an athlete without the presence of another adult. The doors should always be open. Should it be necessary for an official to be alone in the room of an athlete, the

Team Manager or other responsible official must be informed. For the avoidance of doubt this requirement does not apply to parents/legal guardians when in a room with their child.

### **Travel - General**

All team members over 18 years of age retain an overriding responsibility for the welfare of all athletes they accompany during team travel activities. They must maintain a 'duty of care' towards the athletes and they must avoid unaccompanied and unobserved activities with persons less than 18 years of age wherever possible. For the avoidance of doubt this requirement does not apply to parents/legal guardians when in a room with their child.

### **Sexual Relationships while on tour.**

During all team travel activities officials must not, under any circumstances engage in conduct of a sexual nature with an athlete. Improper conduct of a sexual nature by an official towards an athlete includes any form of child sexual abuse (defined within the Stawell Gymnastics Club *Member Protection Policy*) as well as but not limited to the following:

- (a) inappropriate conversations of a sexual nature;
- (b) obscene language of a sexual nature;
- (c) suggestive remarks or actions;
- (d) jokes of a sexual nature;
- (e) obscene gestures;
- (f) unwarranted and inappropriate touching;
- (g) sexual exhibitionism;
- (h) use of any ITC device to show/watch offensive material; and
- (i) any other action that could lead to an athlete being physically, emotionally or psychologically harmed.

### **Adults under investigation**

Adults under investigation in relation to a matter involving child abuse, or any matter which has the potential to render their Working With Children Check (WWCC) (or if based in another State the equivalent requirement), assessment notice withdrawn or a detention order imposed, may be prohibited, by the Stawell Gymnastics Club Committee, from participating in Stawell Gymnastics Club activities.

### **Coach Assistance - Spotting**

Spotting is a necessary part of gymnastics that is required for the safety of the athletes. All coaches must ensure that all physical contact with the athletes which occurs when 'spotting' is appropriate for the situation and necessary for the athlete's safety. It is strongly recommended that coaches ensure that there are other adults present whenever coaching and take care to explain the spotting procedure to the child gymnast.

### **ENGAGING NEW PERSONNEL**

The minimum standard for background checks of employees and volunteers of Stawell Gymnastics Club and its members is the law as it applies in Victoria.

Stawell Gymnastics Club undertakes a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all staff and volunteers which aims to:

- (a) promote and protect the safety of all children who participate in the activities of Stawell Gymnastics Club;
- (b) identify and recruit the safest and most suitable candidates who share Stawell Gymnastics Club's values and commitment to protect children; and
- (c) prevent a person from working at Stawell Gymnastics Club if they pose an unacceptable risk to children.

Stawell Gymnastics Club requires staff and volunteers to pass the recruitment and screening process prior to commencing their engagement with Stawell Gymnastics Club.

As part of the screening and recruitment process, an applicant must provide appropriate evidence (e.g. WWCC or other state equivalent and/or Police check) to show that they are suitable to work with children and young people in a recreational setting.

- (a) All Stawell Gymnastics Club staff and Committee members require a WWCC.
- (b) The following key event personnel must have a valid WWCC:
  - (i) those paid by Stawell Gymnastics Club for their services (excluding bump in and bump out);
  - (ii) Committee Members;
  - (iii) relevant contractors who may have unsupervised access to children;
  - (iv) anyone else who Stawell Gymnastics Club staff feel require a WWCC due to the nature of the work that they are undertaking for Stawell Gymnastics Club.





The type of evidence that an applicant is required to provide to Stawell Gymnastics Club will vary depending on the type of position that they are applying for. However, an applicant will not be offered a position until they provide the required evidence to Stawell Gymnastics Club.

Stawell Gymnastics Club will exercise discretion and may require applicants to provide a Police check in accordance with the law and as appropriate, before they commence their engagement and during their time with Stawell Gymnastics Club in regular intervals.

Stawell Gymnastics Club will undertake thorough reference checks prior to engaging any personnel.

Once engaged, Stawell Gymnastics Club will provide staff and volunteers with access to the policy and staff and volunteers must review and acknowledge their understanding of the policy.

Stawell Gymnastics Club requires all Committee Members, Volunteers, Coaches and Judges and anyone else who has contact with children to possess a valid working with children check.

#### **RISK MANAGEMENT APPROACH**

Child safety is a part of Stawell Gymnastics Club's overall risk management approach.

#### **POLICY BREACHES**

It is a breach of this policy for any person or organisation to which this policy applies, to have been found to have done anything contrary to this policy. Any person who may breach this policy are subject the *Member Protection Policy*, or the Gymnastics Victoria Discipline Process, whichever is relevant.

#### **POLICY PROMOTION**

This policy will be made available to all members via the Stawell Gymnastics Club website.

This policy will be communicated to all staff, Board, and Technical Committee members.

#### **REVIEW PROCESS**

This policy will be reviewed by the Stawell Gymnastics Club Committee on a biennial basis.

In addition to the regular review of this policy, recommendations for changes to the policy may be submitted to the Committee for consideration at any time. In the event that changes are accepted, the



policy will be updated, and circulated to all stakeholders via the webpage, bulletin and other appropriate communication channels